

and the mysteries of the Holy Trinity. But it necessary to say a few words about this new doctrin which was to shake the world, and to shew how came into being. Arius started from the Sonship c Christ, and argued thus: If Christ be really, and nc simply metaphorically, the Son of God, and if th Divine Sonship is to be interpreted in the same wa as the relationship between human father and soi then the Divine Father must have existed before th Divine Son. Therefore, there must have been time when the Son did not exist. Therefore, th Son was a creature composed of an essence or bein which had previously not been existent. And ina much as the Father was in essence eternal and eve existent, the Son could not be of the same essenc as the Father. Such was the Arian theory stated i the fewest possible words. " Its essential propos tions," as Canon Bright has said, * " were these tw< that the Son had not existed from eternity and the he differed from other creatures in degree and not i kind." There can be nothing more misleading tha to represent the Arian controversy as a futile log< machy, a mere quarrel about words, about a sing! vowel even, as Gibbon has done in a famous passag< It was a vital controversy upon a vital dogma of tt Christian Church.

Two years seem to have passed before Bisho Alexander, finding that Arius was growing bolder i declared opposition, felt compelled to make an a tempt to enforce discipline within his diocese. Tli insubordinate priest of Baucalis had rejected tt

* *The Age of the Fathers*> chap. v.